fill up their time without music, theatres and picture-galleries, novels and poetry. Granted that one could keep them from this indulgence, either they would strive less eagerly for leisure, and the invidious sight of the rich would be less common (a great gain for the stability of society), or they would have leisure, but would learn to reflect on what can be learnt and unlearnt: on their work, for instance, their associations, the pleasure they could bestow. All the world, with the exception of the artist, would in both cases reap the advantage. —Certainly, there are many vigorous, sensible readers who could take objection to this. Still, it must be said on behalf of the coarse and malignant that the author himself is concerned with this protest, and that there is in his book much to be read that is not actually written down therein.

176.

THE MOUTHPIECE OF THE GODS.—The poet expresses the universal higher opinions of the nation, he is its mouthpiece and flute; but by virtue of metre and all other artistic means he so expresses them that the nation regards them as something quite new and wonderful, and believes in all seriousness that he is the mouthpiece of the Gods. Yes, under the clouds of creation the poet himself forgets whence he derives all his intellectual wisdom—from father and mother, from teachers and books of all kinds, from the street and particularly from the priest. He is deceived by his own art, and really believes, in a naive period, that a God is speaking through him, that he is creating in a